



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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February 27, 2019

The Honorable Senfronia Thompson
Chairman, House Public Health Committee
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Chairman Thompson,

It is an eminently welcome development that the Texas Legislature is considering spending more on the mental and behavioral health of our children. Our state seems to be arriving at a consensus that we need to do more to nurture the mental health of our children. However, it's also essential that the taxpayers' money is spent wisely, and that we develop mechanisms to evaluate this spending. I firmly support House Bill 906, which will establish a university-based, collaborative task force to study mental health services in Texas public schools.

HB 906 will provide accountability by addressing the outcomes and effectiveness of the new services and training provided. It will track improvements in student academic achievement, attendance, reductions in student disciplinary proceedings, suspensions and expulsions. It will track the relative successes in providing early mental health prevention and intervention. HB 906 will evaluate whether students are developing the skills needed to manage emotions and maintaining positive relationships. It will, further, track any reductions in substance abuse and suicide.

HB 906 will, additionally, study the effectiveness of promoting a positive school climate, including improving public school safety and will promote best practices for schools in providing these services. Lastly, it will track any disparities in the race, ethnicity, gender, special education status, and geographic location of students receiving these essential services.

The Texas legislature is poised to spend millions in mental and behavioral health. HB 906 will provide needed accountability to make certain these monies are spent effectively and efficiently. I wholly support its passage in 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner", is written over a horizontal line.

Sylvester Turner
Mayor